3:Stone E-5 (1945) 1949
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Boruca

226 used in the river for larger fish. The pejibaye part is fitted into the cane and tied with string. The string used for fishing is always made of *pita* (*Aechmea magdalenae* André) (see p. 15). Occasionally a bow is used to shoot the fish. The only difference between the arrow and the spear, is that the arrow has a trifle shorter shaft.

Crayfish and river crabs are caught by hand, chiefly by the young boys who remove the stones in the stream and catch the shell fish from under them. It is nothing unusual that a hundred or more are caught at one time, the result being enjoyed by practically the whole tribe.

252 [415] **Food Preparation.** The food of the *Boruca* is cooked in earthenware vessels, and, if the means of the family permit, in iron pots. These are placed on top of the three hearth stones, which are on the earthen floor, or on the *fogón*, or stove (see p. 12). For grinding grain, metates or grinding stones, called *tumbas* in Costa Rica, are used. These are natural boulders worn smooth on top. The grinding is done with a smaller flat stone with wide rounded edges. This stone is held up-right on the edges and is rolled from side to side, and not pushed backward and forward as in the greater part of Central America (see fig. 5, *a*). The small metates found in ancient graves are never used for corn, but frequently for grinding cacao, often with a pestle-like stone as the grinder.

264 415 When food is not taken by hand from the vessel in which it is cooked, it is served on cheap tin plates, or, in poorer households, in gourds (see p. 19), and eaten either with the fingers, a spoon, or a fork.

258 [263 484] One of the most important elements of food of the *Boruca* is salt (see p. 24). The *Boruca* make a trip to the coast yearly to extract the famous *sal de piedra*, or rock salt, which lasts indefinitely, and has a fishy strong flavor. This rock salt is made by gathering the driftwood on the beach and burning it. A *haba* (a large-holed basket made of a vine or tree fiber, see p. 15) is lined with leaves and hung over a clay vessel. The ashes are put into the *haba* and sea water poured over them. The residue from this filtering process falls into the clay pot. This residue is cooked until it is dry and then recooked, about three times in all. The result

353 gun pellets; the necessary equipment for fishing and hunting; hen nets or nests for laying
[291] made of vine; bark containers or *hɔvas;* remedies in gourds, net bags, wrapped in *bijagua*
[415] leaves, or, rarely, in bottles; tobacco leaves; bright feathers from birds, in particular the
[237] oriole and macaw; toucan bills; dried flowers; sea shells and the shells of crustaceans; animal skins for dress or for curing purposes; fibers for making rope or string; and seeds and tubers for planting.

352 513 *Cabuya* string (*see* Fibers) hammocks, made by the Bribri men and used by them and the Cabécares, are also suspended from the roofs of all houses and are for sleeping as well as resting. Instead of hammocks, sometimes leaves are placed on the ground by the fire and are used for sleeping. This is inconvenient as dogs and pigs are apt to disturb people sleeping on the floor.

352 Low tetrapod wooden stools or benches are common. These may be long, rectangular, or
[531] circular and are often decorated with a protruding head and tail. The women sit on them while cooking, or people while talking, in order not to be bothered by smoke. The
[824] benches are generally made of cedar by the men and are called *kaLwa* or *bekkegLə* in Cabécar and *kuLá* [77] in Bribri.

415 Close to the roof or the low wall, wooden mixing trays or wooden mortars, *hɔvas*, and basketlike containers (*deku* in Cabécar), fre-
[824] quently lined with *bijagua* leaves to hold chicha paste, are raised on wooden supports to protect them from animals. Large earthen chicha jars with a pointed base are found in all the big circular houses of the Bribri and in some Cabécar ones (fig. 4, *c*). There is always
[439] one or more iron pots, bought in Limón or a Company commissary (fig. 6, *d*). This is true even in upper Talamanca. Here and in the
[824] remote parts of Chirripó, *bijagua* leaves frequently serve as plates and cups, and instead
[264] of spoons, knives and forks, the fingers are used for eating from these or from a common
[753] pot or gourd. People say that eating utensils are "dirty" and fear sickness as a result of their use.

352 177 In the smaller houses, the general furnishings are the same. As these dwellings are usually

[192] to the Bribri term *kuLá*. In this section, the two groups are in close contact.

352 sufficient for an adult to sit in, is an important item of trade. They are found in Cabécar, Térraba, and Boruca households (*see* Trade).

286 [177] **Weaving.** The art of weaving was possibly borrowed by the Bribri from other cultures. It is practically non-existent today and does not appear to have been practised by the Cabécares in historical times. Gabb[91] gives a detailed account of the technique and mentions belts, burial cloths for bones, breechcloths, and "women's petticoats." Undoubtedly, skirts are meant and not underwear. Skinner cites headbands and blankets.[92] The only evidence of actual Bribri weaving known to the writer are belts, made by some men on the upper Lari and at Cabagra, and four skirts, made by women who claim to have been taught by the Borucas. The Bribri weave is distinguished by its coarseness. The decoration [531] of the skirts consists of wide brown and white stripes which suggest a relationship with that of the Borucas.

415 824 **Gourds.** Gourds are employed as water jars, containers, and cups for liquids of any kind; as receptacles, often with a *pita* handle for hanging on the wall; for carrying seeds when planting; and as sieves, in particular for making [252] *pejibaye* flour. Pieces of gourds are sometimes [264] used as spoons to dish out food and occa- [534] sionally to eat with. Rattles are also made.

[531] The gourds are generally plain, and when decorated, the designs are crude cuts or child-like drawings. The holes in the sieves are made [322] with a metal point attached to a wooden handle.

323 **Pottery.** Today, only in the region of the upper Lari is there any attempt at pottery making. Here the Bribri are said still to fashion the large clay chicha jars seen in the round houses (*see* Furnishings; fig. 4, *c*) by coiling. This process is described in detail by Skinner.[93] 273 Chicha is generally kept in leaf-lined *bavas* or in large wooden troughs.

501 824 **Canoes.** The Talamanca Bribri are the only people to make canoes. Cedar, *espavel* (*Ana-*

[91] Skinner, 1920, pp. 77–78. The writer has a large brown and white blanket made by the Bribri men about 1900.
[92] Skinner, 1920, pp. 67–68.

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Bribri
Cabecar

805 On the Pacific side, the school has been
192 responsible for the use of the European divi-
177 sions.[1] These have been incorporated into the local tongue, e.g., *nomingoét*, which literally is "Sunday" from the Spanish *domingo*, and *ét*, the Bribri "one." This means one week.

[1] [i.e.: divisions of time - Analyst.]

LIFE CYCLE

843 mother a drink made from barks and herbs which is supposed to stop the lochia.

844 Birth. Birth itself must take place unattended
[343] in a separate house made by the father of leaves or branches and located beside a running stream or at least a water hole. The woman, once she enters this shelter, must be seen by no one until the medicine man prepares her after everything is over. The belief is that a
[826 761] woman about to bear has four eyes, and if any person or animal sees her in this state, he will die. Food is carried to her in a leaf which
● [264] must be buried as soon as it has served its purpose so that neither animal nor human being can walk on it. If this should happen, the mother would have a violent stomach-ache. The bringer of the food, usually an old woman, must turn her face away so as not to look as she gives it, and must take pains not to
[262] touch the mother. Salt, chocolate, tapir, and pork are tabu during this period.

Birth is given in a stooping position. The umbilical cord is cut with a knife fashioned from the tender part of wild cane or from a pig bone, or is crushed with stones. It is tied with cotton thread made especially for this purpose (*see* Fibers). The umbilical cord and the afterbirth are buried where the child is born. It is believed that if another spot is chosen, the child will roam away from his mother. After the cord is tied, he is washed in the stream. Among the Caribbean Cabécar, the
846 woman stays isolated for eight days: four in the birth shelter, and four in the house. For the first four days, an old woman brings the mother a hot liquid made from the bark of
[824] trees, in particular that of *kaoli* (*Phoebe mexicana*), with which to bathe herself and the child. When she returns to the house, she

[**] Pittier, 1938, p. 23.

551 [756] ripó, only the medicine man has a name which cannot be divulged. When there is no Christian term, parents call their children affectionately after colors or according to the kind of hair they might have. Other people designate them by their clan, e.g., son of *túgwa*, etc., which in Talamanca, at least, has all the significance of a family name. On the Pacific side, the non-baptized are called brother (*taʒe*) among the Bribri. *kutá*, meaning "sister," is not used for non-baptized people. All children receive a pet name at birth from their mother. One Bribri informant was called *kLeLe*, a term which he could not interpret apart from the fact that it was an endearing one. Animal names are also given and are used only by the immediate family. In public, Spanish names are heard. Cousin is used generally for both sexes as an affectionate term (for a more detailed list *see* Kinship Terminology).

881 [145] **Puberty.** Girls start to menstruate between 12 and 14. On this first occasion a house of plantain or banana leaves is constructed apart from the dwelling and so arranged that light is not permitted to enter (*see* Tabus). The girl is fed only by her mother and follows a strict diet consisting almost entirely of fruits, with [262] the exception of bananas, and no salt. Further- [271] more, she cannot drink water other than that from a well or a place where the water is not flowing. When her period is over, she bathes in a spring that is almost dry. The medicine [756] man gives her copal (*Protium Costarricense* [824] [Rose] Engler) bark to chew and a drink made [278] from plants and roots. This beverage prevents menstruation for two months. After that the 841 flow comes regularly. At no time when menstruating can the girl serve men at meals, and ● [264] during this period she must stay aside even [262] in her home, abstain from salt, and drink from a gourd apart from the rest.

854 [862] [855] **Education.** The overindulgence of babies is common and they are weaned anywhere from one and a half to two years of age. They are held continually in someone's arms, carried on the back, or swung in a hammock. In Talamanca and Chirripó, the customary manner of

846 also can mean "feces" and "bread." *pa* means "around
756 one." *kuak* is "to bathe."
192 [1] Segarra y Julia, 1907, pp. 552–53.
[2] Pittier, 1938, pp. 27–28.

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854 carrying a baby or small child is astride the hips held by a cotton cloth or *mastate* (*see* [855] Bark Cloth) strip. One never sees a baby [856] crawl and they are given anything they cry for. It is interesting to note that habits in con- 863 nection with excretion are taught practically from birth. The child is taken out of the house and held up while he does his needs. He is not allowed to do so on a lap nor in the dwelling itself.

593 The family is very close. It is not unusual to see a mother put her arm around a son, or 854 a father lie in a hammock with his small children beside him. Parents pay attention to personal details, such as wiping a child's nose or washing its face. There are not, however, ●264 regular meal hours. One eats when there is food and when one is hungry. The Pacific [177] Cabécar copy the rules of the school and eat three times a day in their own homes.

868 Almost as soon as they can walk, both sexes are taught to swim and help to make fires, using the fire fan and blowing. Girls are taught [864] to pull their skirts between their legs when sitting on the low benches or on the ground before the hearth. At the age of seven, they begin to clean the house, cut fire wood, and cook. The boys cut wood, fish, and hunt, using small arrows for training. When the adults are out in the fields or hunting, children up to ten years old stay at home to tend the fire and to work about the house. Parents also 867 are responsible for teaching tribal customs, for example: the clans with which one can marry; [788] tabus; the baptism of one's self with salt water when seeing the sea for the first time,[104] etc.

[871] In Talamanca and Chirripó, there is no school and all lore is learned by word of mouth on rainy nights around the hearth. "Study" is [756] restricted to those preparing to be medicine men (*see* The Medicine Man), who must undergo a severe apprenticeship, or in a less [767] lengthy manner to those who want to have some connection with the handling of the dead (*see* Death). Games are limited and simple. 857 Small children take pebbles or grass in their [524] toes and try to place them in a straight line. Often they play with mud daubers' nests or similar objects connected with their environ- [526] ment. Boys play at marksmanship with a bow,

[104] Pittier, 1938, p. 20.

764 (*see* Fibers). They cover the bark cloth with the leaves of white *bijagua* (*murksí*) and tie it again with the special string. Leaves of the white *bijagua* are essential for the dead. They are not used to wrap or serve food as is the black *bijagua* (*bikuLəkə*) because they have a faint taste and odor. After the feast the bundle is "buried" in the forest. In effect, it is covered with briar bushes and branches or is even placed in a shallow grave.

Gabb [112] gives a description of two deaths he witnessed among the Bribri in the second half of the past century.

In 1947, the writer had the opportunity to be present at a ceremony for a little girl in Cabécar, the account of which follows. When we arrived at the house, a small ceremonial fire called *hamburu* had been made and beside it the *já* had placed a gourd filled with water. As we entered, they put another gourd filled with *chilate*, a preparation of ground maize, ripe bananas, and water, on a white *bijagua* leaf by the fire as well as a cotton burr and a little raised-rim grinding stone with a pestle on top.

Some cotton without seeds was tied with *pita* to a stick. There was also a *mochila* or net carrying bag with two small gourds filled with ground cacao and ground maize, respectively (fig. 11, *b*). The belief is that the soul goes below where the sun comes from. When the sun rises, the soul goes along with it to the sky but always returns below. The food set by the fire is needed for this journey.

The *bika'kra* or Organizer of the Feast put this food on the raised shelf where the body was lying hidden by a banana leaf screen made with a pole frame. Then he undertook the task of seeing that there was enough food for the people present.

The grieved mother, a widow, remained apart from everyone, sitting at the very edge of the house, grimly silent. As long as the dead was there, custom decreed that she could not do a thing, neither eat, except to drink chocolate, nor talk at length. She also had to be bathed with hot water by a woman after the body was removed. Meanwhile the Organizer of Feasts arranged the banquet which various women were preparing over a big fire inside the house. He also fixed the raised shelf which was rather fragile.

[112] Gabb, 1875, pp. 497–99.